

HOLDEN-SWEETING HOUSE
4112 Gallatin Street
Hyattsville
Prince Georges County
Maryland

HABS NO. MD-1013

HABS
MD
17-HYATV
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS AND
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HOLDEN-SWEETING HOUSE

HABS NO. MD-1013

HABS
MD
17-HY/ATV,
2-

Location: 4112 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville, Prince George's County, Maryland

Present Owner: Mr. & Mrs. Lester and Sharon Sweeting (also present occupant)

Present Use: private residence

Significance: The Holden-Sweeting House is an excellent example of a suburban cottage in the decorative, Queen Anne style. The house is part of the late 19th-century suburban development of Hyattsville which occurred along the Washington Branch of the B&O Railroad, providing housing for the middle-class work-force in Washington, D.C.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1897. Louis J. Holden purchased part of lots 10 & 11 of "Wine & Johnson's First Addition to Hyattsville" in 1896, and his house was completed the following year.

2. Architect: The architect is unknown, but there is reason to believe that this house was designed by one of the many firms producing pattern-book plans during this period. An almost identical house appears in the suburban community of Riverdale, built fifteen years later.

3. Original and subsequent owners: (taken from the National Register nomination prepared by Susan Pearl).

1896 Deed JWB 38:36, 2 July 1896
William H. Martin and Elizabeth, his wife of Washington, D.C.
To
Lewis F. Holden
West half of Lots 10 & 11 in Wine and Johnson's First Addition to Hyattsville, \$475.00.

1905 Deed 20:589, 31 March 1905
Lewis F. Holden and Minnie Holden

HOLDEN-SWEETING HOUSE
HABS NO. MD-1013 (page 2)

- To
William W. Smith and Isabelle Smith
West half of Lots 10 & 11 in Wine and
Johnson's First Addition to Hyattsville
- 1908 Equity #3537, July 1908
Trustees sale
- 1908 Deed of Trust 47:131, 2 May 1908
William W. Smith and Isabelle Smith
To
Lorenzo Bailey and Fillmore Beall
Smiths indebted, including \$2,400 loan from
the Hyattsville Building Association;
therefore, they deed to Bailey and Beall in
trust, their property, the west half of lots
10 & 11 and lots 12 & 13 in Wine and Johnson's
First Addition to Hyattsville.
- 1908 Deed 50:268, 31 December 1908
Lorenzo Bailey and Fillmore Beall, trustees
To
Jennie B. Wells
Property which Bailey and Beall received in
trust from William W. and Isabelle Smith (cf.
Equity #3537 and Trust 47:131).
- 1912 Deed 63:386, 13 April 1912
Jennie B. Wells & Robert W. Wells
To
M.H.B. and Mary Hoffman
West half of lots 10 & 11.... and west 25 feet
of lots 12 & 13 bounded by an alley which
Robert Wells acquired in 1910 by Deed 54:401.
- 1951 Will GSO 2:535, 3 July 1951
Maurice H.B. Hoffman, testor
To
Grace Hoffman, wife. His real estate to his
wife, for her lifetime, otherwise to be sold
by his executors, his daughter Elizabeth
Terpay and her husband George Terpay.
- 1952 Deed 1556:497, 10 November 1952
George and Elizabeth Terpay, trustees of the
Will of Maurice H.B. Hoffman (who died in
1952, cf. Estate file #9950), and Grace
Hoffman, widow of decedent
To
Waters B. Asay and Mary F. Asay

HOLDEN-SWEETING HOUSE
HABS NO. MD-1013 (page 3)

1981 Deed 5413:843, 28 May 1981
 Mary F. Asay
 To
 Lester Sweeting and Sharon Sweeting
 West 75 feet of lots 10 & 11 and west 25 feet
 of 12 & 13 in Wine & Johnson's First Addition
 to Hyattsville.

5. Original plans and construction: No original drawings are known to exist. However, a ca. 1920 postcard (property of current owner) of a streetscape shows the Holden-Sweeting House from the southeast. The only noticeable change is in the porches. The front porch was covered in the area along the facade only. It extended out past the facade and along the side--as it does now--but as an uncovered deck. Also, the current second-floor sleeping porch was not enclosed but was used as a balcony.

6. Alterations and additions: Some minor additions and changes were made in the 20th century. As mentioned above, the front porch was extended past the front facade and around the east side, and the balcony at the east was enclosed to form a sleeping porch. During the Asay family ownership, the original pantry area to the north rear of the dining room was converted into a bathroom. The Sweetings opened up two adjoining bedrooms on the second floor, creating a large opening flanked by columns (S. Sweeting). Ornamental stained-glass windows have been added to the front door and transom window, and an adjacent casement window.

B. Historical Context:

In 1835 one of the first railroad lines in the country, the Washington Branch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, was built from Baltimore to Washington, running through Prince George's County. By providing the means of transportation for commuters, the B&O line became a corridor for development during the late 19th-century. The suburban development of areas such as Hyattsville was part of a national trend. In addition to real estate speculation, the rise of the Federal Government which provided jobs in the capital city helped create the demand for new housing. Thus, suburban developments sprang up along lines of transportation, both railroad and later, trolley lines.

The suburban community of Hyattsville was developed by Christopher C. Hyatt who first purchased the property mid-century. Prior to the suburban development, a small crossroads community formed. By 1859 Hyatt had been named postmaster of this newly formed community which was then given his name. In 1873 Hyatt had a section surveyed and platted into lots roughly 60' x 280', calling it "Hyatt's Addition to Hyattsville." Hyatt's was the first suburban development in Prince George's County (Pearl). By 1878 it had evidently met with great success, having grown into a desirable community. As it was described in Hopkins Atlas of that year:

Hyattsville, on the Washington Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, is a beautiful village, tasteful houses in the Modern style of architecture, ornamented with gardens and lawns, is largely indebted, for its prosperity, to Christopher C. Hyatt.... It (Hyattsville) has gradually increased in beauty and prosperity until it stands as one of the foremost villages between Baltimore and Washington.

Other railroad suburbs would later follow, such as Riverdale, platted in 1887, and Berwyn and Berwyn Heights, in the 1890s.

Capitalizing on Hyatt's success, George Johnson and Louis Wine purchased 196 acres adjoining the original section of Hyattsville in 1882, and platted the development known as "Wine and Johnson's First Addition to Hyattsville." Approximately 100 building lots, measuring roughly 50' x 150', were created. The subdivision included two parklands. This is where Lewis Holden purchased a lot in 1896 and completed a home the following year. Lewis Holden was undoubtedly influenced in his decision by his brother, Frederick A. Holden, who had built a house on the adjoining lots some years before, in 1883 (Pearl).

Although the source of the plans for the house has not been discovered, evidence suggests that it was a pattern-book design. The evidence includes another house in the B&O railroad subdivision of Riverdale, which is almost identical--although built 15 years later. Mail-order and pattern-book designed homes, a popular means of obtaining a home during that period, are largely a product of suburbanization. The rise of suburban development aimed at middle- and moderate-income families was in full swing during the 1880s and 1890s. This new growth created both the need for a new house type (something between a town

house and a country house) and a way to provide house designs cheaply and in volume. Thus, mail-order plans and/or houses became one of the primary means for designing and building suburban housing. Mail-order companies such as Robert W. Shoppell's Cooperative Building Plan Association were responsible for a number of houses in the suburban communities of Hyattsville of Berwyn Heights.

Lewis Holden and his wife, Minnie, later sold their house in 1905 to William Wolfe Smith. Smith, however, defaulted on his mortgage to the Hyattsville Building Association a few years later and it was sold by trustee. The advertisement for its sale described the property as "improved by a fine residence, with seven rooms, bath, attic, etc., formerly occupied by William Wolfe Smith. Property in good condition, in the best residential part of Hyattsville" (Equity #3537). It was sold to Jennie and Robert Wells in December of 1908 (Deed 63:386). The Wells added to the property, purchasing the west 25 feet of lots 12 & 13. In April of 1912, the Wells sold the house to Maurice Hoffman and his wife. The Hoffmans remained here for many years. When Maurice Hoffman passed away in July of 1951, the property passed to his wife, Grace, who remained here only a short time, selling it in November of 1952 to Waters and Mary Asay. After the death of her husband, Mary Asay rented rooms here. She sold it to the current owners in 1981 (S. Sweeting).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Holden-Sweeting House is basically of the Queen Anne style as characterized by its irregular configuration and roofline with front facing gable, projecting bays and oriel window, half-timber framing, etc. The house, however, is a later Queen Anne style and thus reflects the transition into the less ornamental and more box-like Shingle, Craftsmen and Bungalow styles as seen in the front porch which does not have the turned posts and spindlework of the traditional Queen Anne porch.

2. Condition of fabric: The house appears to be in good condition with the majority of its original plan and architectural detailing intact.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: This is a two-and-a-half-story, square building with projecting bays and cross-gables, and a porch across the front and part of the side wall.
2. Foundations: The house rests on a brick foundation.
3. Walls: The walls are covered with german siding, with half-timbering in the cross gables which appear in numerous places on the exterior.
4. Structural system, framing: The house is of wood, presumably balloon, framing.
5. Porches, balconies: A porch runs the length of the south front, extending out and along part of the east side. The porch is supported by heavy posts which form flat-arched openings, resting on brick pedestals. There is a balustrade with curved balusters in the shape of a console bracket. At the west end over the front entry is a pediment with boxed returns and half-timbering, supported by console brackets. At the south end of the east side on the second story is a former balcony, now enclosed as a sleeping porch. It retains its balustrade with turned balusters, and spindlework along the top. To the west side of the north rear is a small entry porch supported by turned posts and covered with latticework screens.
6. Chimneys: There is an interior brick chimney towards the rear of the house to serve the kitchen. The house has a false, corner fireplace in the parlor, and a mantel piece only in the stairhall behind it--but no chimney.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance, at the west end of the south front facade, has a plain wooden surround with a stained-glass transom window. The wood panelled door has a large art glass window in a floral motif in the upper panel (window and transom, not original).
 - b. Windows: The typical window is a one-over-one-light double-hung sash. The windows in the bay at the east side are twelve-over-one-light double-hung sash. The dormers at either side elevations have six-over-one-light double-hung-sash windows. There are also a number of small casement windows in

various gable ends. At the front, to the west side of the doorway, is another example of art glass, a small fixed window to match the glass in the front door and transom (also new). There are louvered shutters on the front bay window only.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The Holden-Sweeting House has a complex roof with crossing gables and extending bays, and a hipped-roof oriel window. The roof is covered with composition shingles.

b. Cornice, eaves: There is a boxed cornice with returns in the gable ends and crown molding along the outer edge. The eaves overhang, and there is a plain frieze board.

c. Dormers: There is a dormer at both of the side elevations, east and west. They have gable roofs with returning box cornices and double, six-over-one-light double-hung-sash windows.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. First floor: There is a large stairhall with the stairway along the west wall. There is a mantelpiece on the east wall, between the doorways into the parlor to the front and the dining room to the rear. Straight ahead, under a spindle-screened archway, is the doorway into the kitchen. The southeast parlor has a large bay-window front. There is a corner fireplace to the northwest. A large doorway adjoins the parlor with the dining room to the rear. At the east wall of the dining room is another large bay window. There is a doorway at the north wall into a bathroom. A doorway at the west wall leads to a hall and into the kitchen. In the kitchen, there is an exterior doorway at the north rear wall into a small back porch.

2. Stairways: The stairway is a closed-string, open-well, three-flight stairway. It begins with two steps up to a landing and then turns 90 degrees and runs along the west wall to a second landing, turns another 90 degrees and continues to the second-floor hall. There are two newel posts at the foot of the stairs, one to either side

of the first two steps. The newels are squared with fluted panels and bull's eyes below a rounded newel cap. The balustrade has turned balusters. Below the step ends are spandrel walls.

3. Flooring: There is narrow board, wooden flooring.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are plaster. There are small circular ceiling medallions in the hall, dining room and parlor. The medallion in the parlor has a leaf pattern and a brass, three-lamp lighting fixture.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors: The doorways have symmetrically molded, fluted surrounds with bull's-eye corner blocks. The doorways between the hall and parlor and the parlor and the dining room have double pocket doors. The pocket doors have five horizontal panels, and decoratively cast hardware. Most of the other doors also have five horizontal panels, and cast hinges, door plates and knobs.

b. Windows: The windows surrounds are also symmetrically molded with bull's-eye corner blocks. The windows in the dining room have shutters which fold into the reveals.

6. Decorative features and trim: There is a false fireplace in the front hall, consisting of a mantelpiece only. It is flanked by colonnettes, has an arched opening with spandrels with bull's eyes, and bull's eyes on the frieze board. Also in the hall, separating the main hall from a perpendicular hall leading to the dining room and kitchen, is a spindlework screen in an arch over the doorway. To either side are pilasters, the top portion of which is fluted and the lower, panelled.

In the parlor there is another false fireplace--mantel and opening, but no chimney--located in the northwest corner. It has a mirrored overmantel with floral carving to either side. The opening is flanked by fluted colonnettes which rise to the top of the overmantel, supporting a second mantel shelf. The mantel shelf is supported by brackets to either side and the frieze below has a bow-and-garland carved ornament.

In the kitchen there is a pressed tin ceiling with decorative square panels and an egg-and-dart border.

7. Hardware: The doors have decoratively cast key plates, knobs, and hinges.

8. Mechanical systems:

a. Heating: The house--which had a central heating system originally--has radiator heat.

b. Plumbing: The house has a period bathroom on the second floor with a claw-foot tub, splash-back sink and wainscoted walls. The third floor bath also has a claw-foot tub.

D. Site:

a. General setting and orientation: The Holden-Sweeting House faces south on Gallatin Street, within a suburban development of late-19th and early-20th century residences. The lots on which the house sits, the west half of lots 10 & 11 (and later part of 12 & 13) were actually intended to be oriented to face 42nd Avenue, around the corner. These lots were evidently re-subdivided creating a lot facing Gallatin from the rear of these two corner lots. The only evidence of this is the remnants of the alley to the west side of the house which used to run behind the lots on 42nd Avenue.

b. Historic landscape design: The lot on which the Holden-Sweeting House rests was part of a platted subdivision, laid out in a grid pattern. Its site was selected to be within easy access to the Washington Branch of the B&O Railroad which lies to the southeast.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Early Views: The current owners possess a ca. 1920 post card of a streetscape of Gallatin Street which features a perspective view of this house as seen from the southeast.

B. Interviews: Interview with the current owner, Mrs. Sharon Sweeting, March 12th 1990.

C. Bibliography:

Gowans, Alan. The Comfortable House; North American Suburban Architecture, 1890-1930. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1987.

G.M. Hopkins, Atlas of Prince George's County,

Washington, D.C.: Hopkins Publishing, 1878.

Pearl, Susan G. (Prince George's Co. Historic Preservation Commission), Maryland Historical Trust, State Historic Sites Inventory Form, prepared September 1987 and February 1988.

Virta, Alan. Prince George's County; a Pictorial History. Norfolk, Va.: The Donning Company Publishers, 1984.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The documentation of the Holden-Sweeting House was undertaken as part of a cooperative project between the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Robert J. Kapsch, chief; and the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission on behalf of the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to document select sites throughout the county. Phase I of the project began in January of 1989, and the second phase of which this project was a part, began in March of 1990. Gail Rothrock, director and Susan G. Pearl, research historian of the HPC made the selection of sites. They also provided access to their research and information on file with the HPC as well as their extensive knowledge of county history. The large format photography was undertaken by HABS photographer Jack E. Boucher. HABS historian Catherine C. Lavoie prepared this historical report and accompanied the photographer into the field for on site inspection.